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ABSTRACT

A study of the role of the attention construct in the process of transforming specific newspaper and television media content into political knowledge involved a survey of 71 undergraduate students in an introductory journalism course. A review of the literature had revealed that the use of the attention construct had been infrequent in mass media research, while two other major types of media variables--exposure and reliance--had frequently been studied, particularly in relation to objective knowleige. Therefore, the study tested attention along with exposure and reliance against subjective and objective knowledge. During the week preceding the United States presidential elections in 1980, the students completed questionnaires that rated their exposure to and reliance on the media, their political interests, the importance they attached to selected political issues, their attention to candidates and to issues, and their objective and subjective knowledge of candidates' positions. Among the conclusions drawn from the study were that television exposure leads to certainty on political issues and that it is a person's own view of his or her knowledge that is likely to lead to its use in political behaviors such as voting. (AEA)

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THE VALUE OF ATTENTION IN RESEARCHING POLITICAL COGNITIONS

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THE VALUE OF ATTENTION IN RESEARCHING POLITICAL COGNITIONS

Studies of the connections between political cognitions and mass media use have abounded in the literature for many years. The key predictors in many recent studies have been exposure to and reliance on newspapers and television (Robinson, 1975, 1976; Becker, Sobowale and Casey, 1979; Becker and Whitney, 1980; to name a few.)

Exposure has been seen simply as time spent with a particular medium, while reliance has encompassed different things for different researchers. In using these constructs, researchers have assumed that individuals do something with mass media content in order to learn from it or remember it at a later date. Neither exposure nor reliance makes a direct link between content carried and cognitive processes necessary to process that information. So, there is a "black box" in the space where the information environment and mind meet. The construct of attention could help shed light on the processes involved in the transformation of mass media content, specifically from newspaper and television, into political cognitions.

In their study of communication variables as predictors of political cognitions, Chaffee and Choe (1979) found attention measures to have considerable predictive power beyond "standard media exposure measures." McLeod, Luetscher and McDonald (1980) report that while television exposure and reliance are unrelated to economic knowledge, attention to news predicts to such knowledge.

While both studies underscore the importance of the attention construct, items used measure attention to news in general rather than to specific issues or personalities. The operationalization that Chaffee and Choe study is, "When you read the newspapers (or watch the news on TV), do you pay a great deal of attention to national news and what the government does, do you pay some attention, or don't you pay much attention to national news?" This question not only asks about attention to the general content area, but also to the medium in question. Chaffee and Choe also find that a person's

other activities while watching television predict to a significant increment in the variation accounted for in political knowledge variables. They consider this measure of distraction to be a test of attention to content. If so, this would have to be one of the most global of such measures.

McLeod et al. operationalize attention in the following manner: "When you are reading the newspaper and come across the following kinds of stories about current events and politics, how much attention do you pay to them? (Stories about) National government and politics? State government and politics? Local government and politics? A similar question for television news is also asked. Cronbach's alpha for these three questions is .74 suggesting that they do not tap very different dimensions. Again, attention to content is confounded with attention to medium.

Chaffee and Choe conclude that, "questions about attention to or interest in specific kinds of content would seem more promising additions (to future research) than questions about exposure to the media." (p. 24). This paper concurs with their conclusion and tests specific measures of attention as predictors of political cognitions.

ATTENTION

Use of the attention construct has been infrequent in mass media research. However, it has been given considerable thought in cognitive developmental and psychological literature. It is from this literature that much of the theory concerning attention in this paper stems.

Attention, according to The Webster Dictionary, is, "a concentration of the mind on a single object or thought and a state of consciousness characterized by such concentration." The Webster further defines consciousness as, "having (one's) mental faculties fully active." The American College Dictionary not only defines attention as the concentration of the mind upon an object, but also as the "maximal integration of higher mental processes." These definitions reflect two perspectives of the concept that exist in the literature. The first concerns selective allocation of attention, or the decision to sensitize the human mind to focus on a specific stimulus. The second

is of attention as a cognitive processing mechanism.

Much of the disagreement among researchers concerning the nature of attention stems from its tie-in with cognitive processing. Broadbent (1958, 1971) conceptualized attention as a filter mechanism located between the sense organs and what he called the central processing system (CPS). Its sole purpose was to either block a message stimulus or permit it to enter the CPS where cognitive processing of meaning occurred. The attention filter was presumed to use the grossest physical characteristics of the message stimulus in accepting or rejecting it. Since very little knowledge was used in the decision, attention could not be said to be an information-processing mechanism. While accepting the Broadbent model of attention, Treisman (1960, 1964) argued that the rejected stimulus gets processed for meaning by the filter, thus laying the foundation for treating attention as a cognitive processing concept.

According to Kahneman (1973), paying attention is like doing work in which cognitive energy is expended. Since this energy is limited, an individual cannot simultaneously deal with all the surrounding stimuli and consequently has to work to optimally allocate attention. Some selective attention theorists like Keele and Neill (1978), who ignore the idea of cognitive processing in their definitions, believe effort and choice to be necessary for this task of allocating attention. Berlyne (1970) says that the allocation function occurs after the sense organs have been stimulated and a choice made from among stimuli already perceived by the individual.

To some theorists, attention and cognitive processing are inseparable. Michon (1978) ties the notion of "psychological present" to attention, whereby sensory information, internal processing and concurrent behavior are all integrated within the same time span. Mandler (1975) looks at attention as conscious awareness while focusing on a stimulus. According to Hochberg (1970) and Neisser (1967, 1976), perception is not simply the activation of something inside an individual by an outside stimulus. Rather, it is the synthesis of the stimulus by the perceiver that is brought about by the activity of conscious attention. One of the major advances in recent years has been the proposition that attention and perception might be two aspects of the same process rather

than two separate processes, one concerned with the analysis of stimuli (perception), and the other concerned with selection from among the analysed stimuli, or attention (Weisberg, 1980).

RESEARCHERS' MODEL OF MEDIA USE

Though researchers of mass media use and political cognitions have only recently begun to use the attention construct, two major types of media variables--exposure and reliance--have frequently been studied. While comparisons between newspaper and television exposure and reliance have not had a long research history, a good deal of literature has accumulated in the past three decades. Several studies show exposure to and reliance on newspaper content to be positive predictors of political knowledge. Blumler and McQuail (1969) found newspapers to be more effective than television in raising levels of political knowledge. Patterson and McClure (1976) came to an analogous conclusion. O'Keefe (1978) found newspaper reliance to be positively correlated to political understanding. Television reliance was unrelated to an understanding of politics. Robinson (1976) and Becker and Whitney (1980) say the reason for this is

> that television form and content do not allow for information processing as well as newspaper form and content do.

The findings for television are mixed. For example, Becker et al. (1979) found that while television reliant persons were less knowledgeable about local civic affairs, no such association for national politics was found. It is not our purpose to follow this literature further, our intent being to consider predictions based on a model of media use with exposure, reliance and attention measures.

Exposure is a measure of the total media information available to a person as decided by that person's life situation and personal habits. If the TV set is on and the person is in the room, then he is being exposed to television. Since this global measure of exposure is probably not powerful enough to predict to a person's cognitions, subsets of total exposure such as nights per week of watching TV news or frequency of watching news specials have been studied. The important delineation is "watching". Exposure is the first variable in our model since it limits the total set of discrete bits of content available.

What reliance is remains a mystery. As operationalized by Robinson, it is a self-report on the most relied upon medium. O'Keefe uses a pair of questions which ask respondents how much they count on television/newspapers to help them make their minds up on who to vote for in the presidential election. Becker and Whitney see reliance as a component of a dependency construct that involves exposure time, content use and preference for a medium. Here, we consider it to be a preference for a specific medium for specific content. A more precise definition of reliance ought to be worked out, but this paper will not address that issue.

Reliance and exposure are hard to place in chronological order. Reliance on a particular medium tends to bring about greater exposure to that medium. Conversely, greater exposure to a medium could, over time, bring about reliance on that medium, atleast for certain types of content. Expecting that exposure is omnipresent, we choose the latter and say that reliance follows exposure.

Attention chronologically follows exposure since it is the emphasis and processing of a subset of the potential range of content set up by exposure. It also follows reliance since it represents the contact of the person with content rather than with the medium producing that content.

Having fit attention into a model of media use, the next question of concern is, "What causes attention to be directed at some types of content (especially public affairs or political content) instead of other types of content?" Two variables are considered in this context -- political interest and felt personal importance of content. Becker and Preston (1969) show that politically interested individuals use the mass media to a greater extent than do the politically uninterested. Individuals have limited attention capacities. Since there is more mass media content than can possibly be attended to, choices between content have to be made. These choices are expected to depend on the salience of the different bits of available content. The greater the interest in particular content, the greater its salience and the higher the probability that it will be attended to. Thus, one would expect public affairs mass media content to be salient to the politically interested, who, in turn, would be expected to pay greater attention to such content.

Even so, when we refer to public affairs content, we are talking about a large mass of heterogeneous information, attending to all of which may still be beyond the capabilities of individuals. Therefore, we argue that, within public affairs content, individuals may be forced to make more finely-tuned choices, and that these choices depend upon the perceived personal importance of some aspect of the content, be it concerning issues or personalities. Hence, it is probable that a politically interested person might, for example, choose to focus on an environmental issue over, let's say, a women's rights issue, because the environmental issue is personally more important to him.

One other factor that may make a difference in attention, and which has not been researched in this paper, is prior knowledge. According to Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee (1954), individuals with the greatest amounts of initial information make the greater use of the mass media during political campaigns. Neisser treats attention as the mechanism by which an outside stimulus is synthesized with an already existing percept. Weisberg believes this synthesizing process to take less effort if the person has prior knowledge in the content areas being processed. Since it takes less effort for them, we would expect those who are knowledgeable on some topic to be more likely to attend to content on that topic. Combined with the likely high salience of the topic, the chances of attending to such content are greatly enhanced.

MEASURES OF POLITICAL COGNITIONS

Two measures of political cognitions, one subjective and the other objective, are used in this study. Traditionally, research has almost exclusively tested objective knowledge. Here, the researchers quiz respondents on their knowledge of political issues or recognition of terms. Included are questions about who the candidates for some office are, their issue stands, what government is doing in foreign and domestic actions, or recognition of pictures of political figures, among other things. The respondent answers either "correctly", as determined by the researcher, or "incorrectly." Scores on these measures are compared across respondents, and those with higher scores are presumed to know more about politics and current affairs. While many of these

measures tap the recall abilities of individuals, they do not touch some important aspects of their cognitive structures.

Individual political behavior may be influenced by what people think they know about political processes rather than by what they "ought to know" as determined by the external observer (Palmgreen, 1979). These perceptions may be contingent upon the amount of attention individuals pay to public affairs content. By attending, the individual synthesizes some public affairs media content into a context or group of interrelated cognitions, which in turn provide a backdrop for discrete cognitions. This network of cognitions provides checks on the "correctness" of each of the cognitions for the individual. Thus, the individual comes to believe in the "correctness" of his own cognitions. Without this type of perception of own knowledge, information held by the person, as tapped by objective knowledge measures, may not be useful in predicting to decisions such as vote choices, etc. One cannot project to decisions on the basis of information one is uncomfortable with.

Hence, while studying political cognitions, the certainty (or uncertainty) of the respondent concerning answers to objective indicators is a necessary item to test. If the two do not correlate highly, then it is quite plausible that individuals are just as certain of "incorrect" answers as they are of "correct" answers. If so, individuals who are incorrect according to the researcher may well be able to use their subjective knowledge in their political actions as well as those presumed to be correct.

This paper tests attention measures along with exposure and reliance measures against both subjective and objective knowledge. Specific predictions for each will be made later.

SAMPLE

Seventy one freshmen and sophomores from an introductory journalism course at the University of Wisconsin-Madison were surveyed for the study. Self-administered questionnaires were used. The questionnaires were administered during the week preceding the 1981 Presidential elections. The election and attendant issues and personalities should have been at peak salience with abundant information about candidates and their issue

stances being carried by the media. The selection of a homogeneous sample precluded the necessity of controlling for demographic variables such as age and education.

MEASURES

EXPOSURE: Frequency of exposure to a medium was measured by the following items:

How many days in the last week did you read a newspaper?(circle one number)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

How many days in the last week did you watch national news on television?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

RELIANCE: This was measured by having respondents rank order from (1) rely most, to (6) rely least, sources they depended on for information about national politics and current events. The choice of sources included newspapers, television, magazines, books, family and friends. To make the list exhaustive, an "other" category was used. Since comparisons between newspaper and television reliance were sought, only responses ranking one highest were coded "1" on the respective reliance measure, with the others "0."

POLITICAL INTEREST: Respondents were asked to indicate their interest in politics on a four point (1) very interested, to (4) not at all interested, scale. This interest scale was then standardized. As an indicator of physical involvement, respondents were asked if they had (a) worn campaign buttons for candidates for public office, (b) handed out campaign materials for a candidate, (c) tried to get someone else to support their candidate, and (d) gone to see a candidate in person. These behaviors were equally weighted, summed and standardized. The standardized interest and behavior scales were again summed and standardized to provide the political interest measure.

PERSONAL IMPORTANCE OF ISSUE: This was tapped by single-item measures, one each for the campaign issues of Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), defense spending, national parks and national gasoline tax. A sample personal importance measure:

How important is the issue of increasing the defense budget to you personally?

Very important Somewhat important Not at all important

ATTENTION TO CANDIDATE: Respondents were asked to report on how much attention they had been paying to what each of the three Presidential candidates (Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan and John Anderson) had been saying during the campaign on a four point

(1) a lot of attention, to (4) no attention, scale. Since the correlations between attention to the three candidates were very high (Table 1), they were summed to form a single candidate attention measure. Cronbach's alpha for the three measures was .89.

ATTENTION TO ISSUE: Simple three point scales were repeated for each of the issues of ERA, defense spending, national parks and national gasoline tax. An example:

> How much attention have you been paying to news about increasing the defense budget during the campaign?
>
> A lot A little None at all

OBJECTIVE KNOWLEDGE: The respondents were asked to place each of the Presidential candidates on four issue scales. For example:

Jimmy Carter	opposed to a defense budget increase	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	favorable to a defense budget increase
Ronald Reagan		_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	
John Anderson		_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	

Any placement to the "correct" side of the neutral point was scored "1". For the issue of national parks, it was not possible to determine candidates' positions from their public statements. For defense, one point each was given for placing Carter and Reagan as favorable to increased defense spending and Anderson as opposed to it. For ERA, Carter and Anderson positions were considered as positive and Reagan as negative. Anderson was considered to be favorable towards a national gasoline tax, while Carter and Reagan were considered as unfavorable towards such a tax. Respondent scores for the three candidates were summed for each issue to yield the objective knowledge measure.

SUBJECTIVE KNOWLEDGE: To tap this, respondents were asked to rate the sureness with which they placed the candidates on the issue scales. For example, after placing Carter on the issue scale for defense spending, respondents were asked:

> How sure are you that this is Carter's position?
>
> Very sure Somewhat sure Not at all sure

Similar sureness questions were asked for each of the candidates for each of the issues. The sureness measures for each issue were then summed and averaged to provide mean sureness measures for each issue.

HYPOTHESES

We have already argued that there is more content on mass media channels than can be attended to. So, individuals are forced to choose between content. One criterion individuals would use to discriminate between mass media content is salience. Salience logically increases when an individual is generally interested in the area suggested by that content. Therefore, one would expect public affairs media content to be salient to the politically interested individual. This individual would pay more attention to such content than his politically uninterested counterparts. Even so, one cannot make the assumption that the politically interested individual would be interested in all of public affairs content. Finer discriminations have to be made since even this reduced set of information is more than the attention capacity of an individual can handle. We have suggested that personal importance of an issue within public affairs content, varying even among politically interested individuals, is a further determinant of salience, and therefore of allocation of attention.

H_1 - General political interest will produce a significant positive beta when regressed on attention to issue measures.

H_2 - Personal importance of an issue should predict significantly to attention even when controlled for general political interest.

We have referred to literature that indicates that exposure to newspaper public affairs content predicts better to objective indicators of political cognitions than television exposure. We have also stated that exposure sets up a potential range of information that individuals can access. There is some evidence that this information can be gathered incidentally and inadvertently even when individuals are not attending to content (Brinton and McKown, 1961; Converse, 1962). Also, the kinds of questions that have been asked in past research aim at low-level political knowledge that can quite possibly be picked up without requiring a great deal of attention. Therefore, we expect newspaper exposure to predict to increases in objective political knowledge, but that television exposure will not. We do not expect attention to add significantly to low level objective knowledge that has been picked up by exposure to and reliance on newspapers. While there is a distinct possibility that attention might predict to

high-level and complex knowledge, this is not tested here for lack of adequate measures.

Incidental pickup of discrete bits of political information should not bring about confidence in those judgements. Confidence does not come about until the new information has been placed in a framework and understood in the context of interrelated cognitions. Attention and its corresponding information processing sets these cognitions into context and relates them to other cognitions held. With this "fit", the individual is able to confirm the "correctness" of each new cognition and consequently becomes more confident about it. Therefore, while neither newspaper nor television exposure and reliance should lead to certainty of political cognitions, attention to content should.

H_3 - Exposure to newspaper public affairs content will produce a significant positive beta when regressed on objective knowledge. So will newspaper reliance. No such expectation is held for television exposure or reliance, or attention.

H_4 - Attention to candidates will produce a significant positive beta when regressed on subjective knowledge measures. Neither exposure to nor reliance on newspapers and television are expected to account for a significant per cent of the variance accounted for in the subjective knowledge measures.

H_5 - Attention to issue will produce a significant positive beta when regressed on subjective knowledge. The expectations for newspaper and television exposure and reliance are the same as in H_4.

DESIGN

Hierarchical regressions were run on attention to issues with general political interest and specific issue importance as predictors. The general political interest measure was entered first, followed by the specific issue importance measure because of the expectation that felt personal importance of an issue would predict significantly to attention over and above generalized political interest.

Hierarchical regressions were also run on the objective knowledge and subjective knowledge measures with attention to candidate and attention to issue as predictors. Exposure measures were entered first because it follows from theory that exposure precedes attention. In the regressions on subjective knowledge, using issue attention, the additional measure of newspaper and television reliance was entered after exposure,

but before attention. The regressions with reliance were completed first, and because of the failure of the reliance measures to predict significantly to sureness, they were dropped from further analyses. Interactions between exposure and reliance have been reported in research (Miller and Reese, 1980). However, because of the small sample used here, and the number of variables that have already been entered into the regression equations, interactions between exposure and reliance are not tested here. Neither will any of the possible interactions with attention, although a good case could be made for looking at them with a larger sample.

The regression procedure was used in order to maintain sample size and precision of the measurement.

RESULTS

The results of the regressions of political interest and personal issue importance on specific issue attention show that general political interest predicts significantly to attention to the ERA and Gas Tax issues (Table 3). It is also slightly positively related with attention to Defense Spending, but this is not significant. No relation exists between general political interest and attention to the National Parks issue. So it seems that general political interest does lead to attention to content on certain specific issues. It is difficult to predict the type of issues that this relation would be expected to hold for. One can imagine that increasing the number of national parks would not be an issue that would draw the attention of the politically interested to a greater extent than the uninterested. The increase of the defense budget would be expected to draw special attention from the politically interested, but very little evidence of this is shown.

Personal importance of the issues predicted very strongly to attention to those issues, even after controlling for the effects of general interest. In all the issue regressions the betas for the personal importance measures were positive and significant. The personal importance of the issues seems to be by far the more powerful predictor.

The regressions of the exposure and attention items on objective knowledge

did not produce any significant betas, so they are not reported here. It seems that the objective knowledge measures did not discriminate well between groups.

Subjective knowledge shows an interesting pattern. Attention to every issue predicts very strongly and significantly to sureness of candidate placements on issue scales (Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6). This strongly supports hypothesis 5. Exposure to newspapers or television, or reliance on either medium was not supposed to lead to certainty, yet television exposure predicts positively and significantly to certainty on all issues but ERA. An interesting finding was that on the National Parks issue, where the least information whould have been available in the media, the media variables predict most strongly, with total R^2 for the newspaper variables at .52, and .56 for the television variables. Newspaper exposure produces a significant positive beta when regressed on certainty of candidate placement on National Parks. So does television exposure. Television reliance produces a significant negative beta in this regression. Again, attention produces a very strong positive beta in these regressions, after control for the exposure and reliance measures.

So it seems that exposure to television news does lead to certainty of candidate positions. The attention to issues measures pick up the lion's share of the variance, though.

Attention to candidates is a significant predictor of certainty on only one issue--Equal Rights Amendment. This can be explained by considering that the ERA was the only issue where all three of the candidates took relatively unambiguous stands and the media carried a good deal of publicity of those stands.

CONCLUSIONS

The hypotheses stating that both general political interest and personal issue importance predict to attention to issue content were supported. Of theoretical importance is the finding that the specific measures were the stronger predictors of attention to specific content. While this is not exactly earthshaking, the size of the R^2s added points to this type of specificity as an important consideration

for future research. These findings indicate that the individual's attention is being directed toward specific content and that the individual is aware of this.

Evidence for the cognitive processing view of attention comes from its strong and positive relations with sureness of candidate issues placements. Respondents' sureness follows directly from the processing of media content concerning the issues in question. Attention to candidates seems not to predict as well to such certainty. Perhaps attention to candidates could be directed at other things, such as candidate personality or image. Attention may not be focussed on the individual personalities at all or in the same way as attention to issues. Or, the measure may not be as good as the issue attention measure.

The unexpected finding that television exposure led to certainty does not follow the general negative view of that medium found in the literature. Perhaps the simplified content that is so bemoaned by the researchers is more conducive to drawing conclusions or making judgments with certainty than is the more complicated content in the newspapers. If this is so, then the added objective knowledge gained from newspaper exposure, as found in other studies but not here, is not enough to bring about certainty of candidate stands. Without certainty of the objective knowledge they hold, newspaper readers would be unable to use those cognitions in vote decisions. They would be forced to use other information in making their vote choices. Television exposure does lead to certainty, however. So the television watcher could use these issue cognitions in a vote choice. This leads to the opposite types of conclusions than have usually been made from objective knowledge measures, assuming subjective knowledge on the part of the respondent. This is an important consideration for future research.

Methodological problems that could have affected the results included question wording and placement on the questionnaire, and sample selection. The sample was small and homogeneous. If undergraduates use media differently than the general population, or have significant differences in their political cognitions, then these results are not generalizable beyond the sample. There is reason to believe that this is a possibility, so the results reported above should be applied to general

theory with care. Also, the questionnaire was so constructed that issue importance and attention to issue were asked in a block that was repeated after candidate placements on each issue. So the strong relationship between the two could be in part attributable to questionnaire design. The same is true for the high correlation between newspaper and television exposure. They followed the same format and were separated by only one question.

While we hesitate to generalize beyond the sample, we feel that the findings here are strong enough to point to two suggestions to be considered in future research on mass communications and political cognitions.

The first is the use of more specific measures of media use to parallel the types of knowledge questions that are to be used in the study. Specifically, we suggest the use of attention as the connection between personal media environment and the cognitive processes necessary to code and store that information for retrieval. The processing found in attention is necessary to bring about fitting of the information into context and so certainty of discrete cognitions. This certainty allows for later use of the information. Attention should be tied to content rather than medium, and the knowledge measures and attention measures should use the same content as a reference. Global attention measures are not likely to account for a large amount of variance. It is much more likely that uses and gratifications can be tied to the attention measure, as indicated by the interrelations of interest, issue importance and attention found here. This use for the concept should be considered.

Second, the subjective knowledge of the respondents should be studied in any consideration of political cognitions. If the respondent answers an objective knowledge question, there is no guarantee that he is answering with conviction. While it is important to know what types of information and how much of that information a person can recall when prompted, it is the person's own view of his knowledge that is more likely to lead to its use in political behaviors such as voting, participating in a boycott, etc. Since the effects of newspaper and television exposure on subjective

knowledge are just the opposite found in most research on objective knowledge, it has been suggested here that television may have advantages over newspapers in some cognitive areas while newspapers have advantages in others.

The results in this research were impressive for the size of the R^2s. and should be considered in the design of other studies. Other operationalzations of the attention concept should be developed and used. The nature of attention should be studied further and incorporated into a general theory of political communication.

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TABLE ONE

Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations

	Y_1	Y_2	Y_3	Y_4	X_1	X_2	X_3	X_4	X_5	X_6	X_7	X_8
Sureness of candidate position on defense spending (Y_1)	--	.08	.24	.33	.25	.33	.13	.01	.40	.29	.19	.29
Sureness on ERA (Y_2)	.08	--	.45	.63	.13	.24	-.09	.12	-.03	.43	.12	.29
Sureness on national parks (Y_3)	.24	.45	--	.70	.09	.19	.16	-.17	.06	.11	.36	-.01
Sureness on national gas tax (Y_4)	.33	.63	.70	--	.08	.40	.10	.20	.07	.27	.25	.35
Newspaper exposure (X_1)	.25	.13	.09	.08	--	.33	.36	.01	.24	.32	.17	.16
Television exposure (X_2)	.33	.24	.19	.40	.33	--	-.06	.34	.25	.36	.34	.46
Newspaper reliance (X_3)	.13	-.09	.16	.10	.36	-.06	--	-.59	.24	.08	.12	.11
Television reliance (X_4)	.01	.12	-.17	.20	.01	.34	-.59	--	.07	.07	-.01	.23
Attention to defense spending (X_5)	.40	-.03	.06	.07	.24	.25	.24	.07	--	.28	.32	.26
Attention to ERA (X_6)	.29	.43	.11	.27	.32	.36	.08	.07	.28	--	.25	.36
Attention to national parks (X_7)	.19	.12	.36	.25	.17	.34	.12	-.01	.32	.25	--	.30
Attention to national gas tax (X_8)	.29	.29	-.01	.35	.16	.46	.11	.23	.26	.36	.30	--

Table 2

Correlations Among Attention Measures

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Attention to Carter (A)	1.00	.64*	.90*	.27*	.27*	.06	.21*
Attention to Anderson (B)	.64*	1.00	.67*	.13	.28*	.05	.29*
Attention to Reagan (C)	.90*	.67*	1.00	.31*	.23*	-.03	.21*
Attention to Defense (D)	.27*	.13	.31*	1.00	.28*	.32*	.27*
Attention to ERA (E)	.27*	.28*	.23*	.28*	1.00	.24*	.36*
Attention to National Parks (F)	.06	.05	-.03	.32*	.24*	1.00	.31*
Attention to Gasoline Tax (G)	.21*	.29*	.21*	.27*	.36*	.31*	1.00

* $p < .05$

Table 3

Hierarchical Regression Analysis

General Political Interest and Specific Issue Importance on Attention to Issues

	Std. Reg. Coeff.	R^2	Inc. R^3	Partial F	Sig. ($p<.05$)
ERA					
Political Interest	.337	.11	.11	8.44	*
ERA Personal Importance	.507	.37	.26	26.34	*
DEFENSE SPENDING					
Political Interest	.184	.03	.03	2.32	n.s.
Defense Spending Personal Importance	.468	.25	.22	18.76	*
NATIONAL PARKS					
Political Interest	.060	.00	.00	.24	n.s.
National Parks Personal Importance	.434	.19	.19	15.15	*
GASOLINE TAX					
Political Interest	.288	.08	.08	5.95	*
Gasoline Tax Personal Importance	.257	.15	.06	4.89	*

TABLE 4

Hierarchical Regression Analysis
Attention by sureness of candidate position on ERA

	Std Reg Coeff	R^2	Inc R^2	Partial F	Significance ($p<.05$)
Newspapers					
Reading frequency	.135	.02	.02	1.17	n.s.
As preferred medium	-.172	.04	.03	1.65	n.s.
Attention to ERA	.562	.33	.29	26.55	*
Television					
Viewing frequency	.173	.03	.03	1.95	n.s.
As preferred medium	.076	.04	.01	.33	n.s.
Attention to ERA	.555	.32	.28	25.44	*

TABLE 5

Hierarchical Regression Analysis
Attention by sureness of candidate position on defense spending

	Std Reg Coeff	R^2	Inc R^2	Partial F	Significance ($p<.0$
Newspapers					
Reading frequency (A)	.220	.05	.05	3.21	n.s.
As preferred medium (B)	.057	.05	.00	.18	n.s.
Attention to defense (C)	.466	.25	.20	16.19	*
Television					
Viewing frequency	.318	.10	.10	7.10	*
As preferred medium	-.109	.11	.01	.74	n.s.
Attention to defense	.431	.28	.17	14.52	*

TABLE 6

Hierarchical Regression Analysis
Attention by sureness of candidate position on national parks

	Std Reg Coeff	R^2	Inc R^2	Partial F	Signficance (p<0.05)
Newspapers					
Reading frequency	.262	.07	.07	4.62	*
As preferred medium	.079	.07	.01	.36	n.s.
Attention to parks	.681	.52	.45	57.32	*
Television					
Viewing frequency (A)	.355	.13	.13	9.11	*
As preferred medium (B)	-.337	.22	.10	8.06	*
Attention to parks	.629	.56	.34	46.77	*

TABLE 7

Hierarchical Regression Analysis
Attention by sureness of candidate position on national gas tax

	Std Reg Coeff	R^2	Inc R^2	Partial F	Significance (p<0.05
Newspapers					
Reading frequency	.193	.04	.04	2.45	n.s.
As preferred medium	.029	.04	.00	.05	n.s.
Attention to gas tax	.570	.36	.32	30.24	*
Television					
Viewing frequency	.382	.15	.15	10.74	*
As preferred medium	.080	.15	.01	.41	n.s.
Attention to gas tax	.511	.36	.21	20.46	*

Table 8
Hierarchical Regression Analysis

Exposure and Attention to Candidates on Surness on Issues

	Std Reg Coeff	R^2	Inc R^2	Partial F	Significance ($p<.05$)
EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT					
Newspaper Reading Frequency	.134	.02	.02	1.18	n.s.
Attention to Candidates	.286	.10	.08	5.71	*
DEFENSE SPENDING					
Newspaper Reading Frequency	.220	.05	.05	3.26	n.s.
Attention to Candidates	.149	.07	.02	1.51	n.s.
NATIONAL PARKS					
Newspaper Reading Frequency	.253	.06	.06	4.41	*
Attention to Candidates	.002	.06	.00	.00	n.s.
GASOLINE TAX					
Newspaper Reading Frequency	.181	.03	.03	2.16	n.s.
Attention to Candidates	.235	.09	.06	3.82	n.s.